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Sorry to dump on you like this.zip

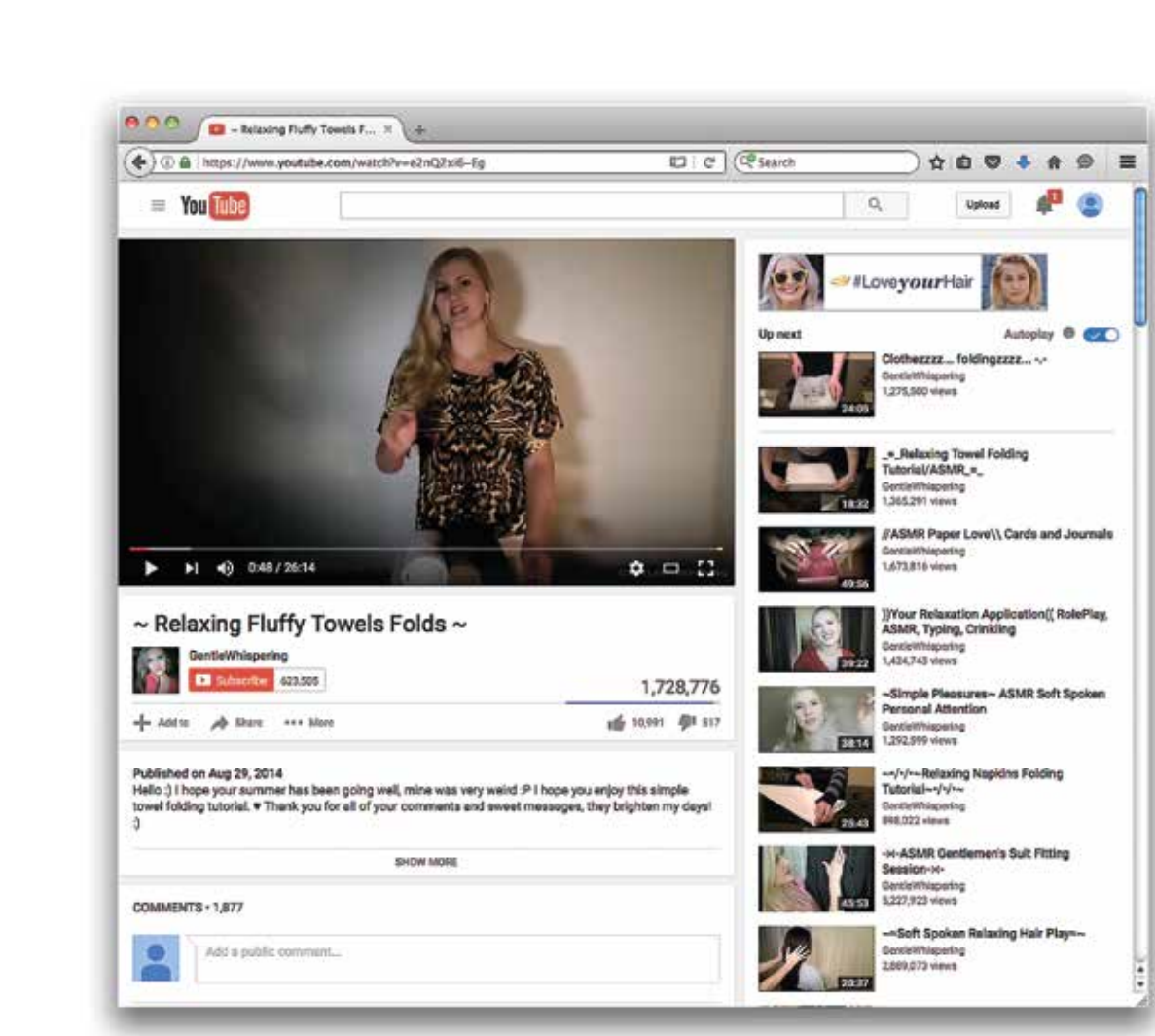
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Michael Connor

Folding the Web



Printed Web 4



Michael Connor

“The yarn is neither metaphorical nor literal, but quite simply material, a gathering of threads which twist and turn through the history of computing, technology, the sciences, and arts. In and out of the punched holes of automated looms, up and down through the ages of spinning and weaving, back and forth through the fabrication of fabrics, shuttles and looms, cotton and silk, canvas and paper, brushes and pens, typewriters, carriages, telephone wires, synthetic fibers, electrical filaments, silicon strands, fiber-optic cables, pixelated screens, telecom lines, the World Wide Web, the Net, and matrices to come.”

Sadie Plant, Zeros + Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture, London: Fourth Estate, 1998.

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“Hey guys! :D I was getting alllloot of requests on doing more folding so I decided to try and make it into a role play sort of a video.”

The video begins with a fair-skinned woman standing before a dark wooden table stacked with several neatly rolled towels. She tells us that we will be watching a tutorial, and that we will learn how to fold towels in a tidy and decorative fashion. The camera lingers as she strokes and caresses the towels; she speaks in a soft voice, as if babying the viewer.

The video, posted from the popular YouTube account GentleWhispering, seems to address an infantile viewing subject who couldn't possibly fold their own towels, or likely even use the toilet unassisted. The fold has no instrumental purpose here apart from offering sensual pleasure to this viewer. The instructions delivered by this maternal figure become a kind of drowse-inducing wash; any information that happens to be relayed is merely incidental, ready to be discarded. The video's description labels it as “for entertainment purposes only,” and the comments focus on the woman's voice, her body, and the aesthetics of the video — only rarely does someone mention towel folding.

Although she is carefully composed on camera, GentleWhispering's comments offer a glimpse of the strain she is under. Her camera broke, the apartment above her flooded, and she felt depressed for a month. Even a successful vlogger lives a precarious existence.

Deleuze used the fold as a way of thinking about divisions that also connect, enabling multiplicity and oneness; enclosures that also open out to the world; forms that could be unformed. Deleuze's fold was also associated with mystery and the female sex organ. Though he wrote at length about the fold, he never discussed folding his own laundry.

Such questions were, of course, traditionally considered outside the scope of European thought, in the sense that they belonged to the domestic realm. The bourgeois public sphere wasn't a place for laundry, it was a place for ideas and discourse.

With the rise of social media, images and information relating to the private life of the home and family are considered fodder for publication, now called “sharing.” At the same time, domestic space and domestic labor are made available for public consumption via the “sharing economy.” Online platforms have embedded themselves in the private sphere, troubling its boundaries.

Though it may sound worrying, this confusion of public and private has its benefits. The realm of discourse and ideas can no longer insulate itself from housework and the embodied knowledge of those who perform it.

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Despite its physical and emotional demands, folding is often relegated to the underpaid and the unpaid. When I lived in Williamsburg, I would often use the drop off service at the local wash and fold. One day, the owner (a chatty, old-school Brooklynite) started complaining about how hard it was to find good “help” to keep the service running. “They get worn out,” he said, and he wasn't talking about my underwear, but about the women who folded it. It was unclear whether the source of the exhaustion was the physical aspect of the labor, or the emotional burden of caring for so many strangers' garments.

Sadie Plant famously argued that the material of digital culture is textile. If this is the case, the work of “folding” our digital material — keeping it tidy and organized and presentable — is largely, and perhaps unwisely, entrusted to platforms, where our folders can now be found. Most of the folding is automated, performed by complex technical ensembles that are largely controlled by men. When it does need to be performed by hand, as with the policing of content, it is still performed by underpaid and invisible labor forces. In the age of the cloud and Spotlight and seemingly endless storage, I've gotten worse at backing up, deleting unwanted files, and organizing the ones that remain. My Downloads folder begins to resemble my sock drawer: I'm in need of help, and getting none from GentleWhispering.

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“Many people think first, which one should i get rid of? But it is much more important to think, which one to keep.” In an on-campus talk at Google, Japanese tidying guru Marie Kondo described a careful and intentional approach to discarding unwanted objects as a way

to a more joyful life. She argues that one should be able to see every garment in a drawer immediately upon opening it, with each item folded to stand at attention, ready to be re-performed.

When making the decision about what to let go, Kondo emphasizes the importance of understanding one's embodied relationship to any item. “Make sure you touch it ... Imagine how your body reacts to that moment, how you feel when you touch the item.”

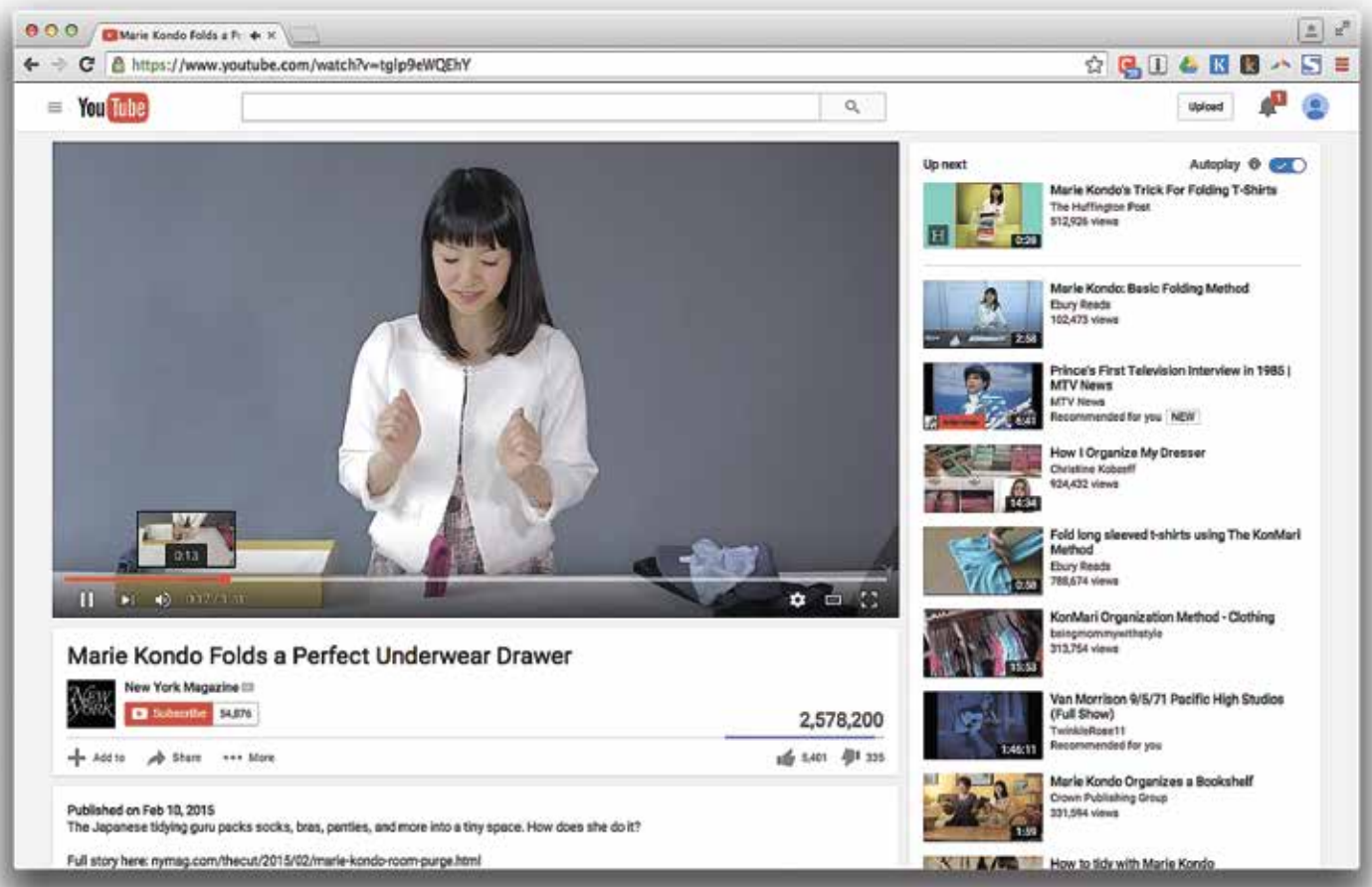
In a digital context, this embodied relationship could be understood as a way of escaping the pitfall of understanding digital culture, as if it revolves around a “disembodied image, re-created in the virtual spaces of sign-exchange and phantasmatic projection.” Carol Armstrong called this the “cyberspace model” of visual culture, glossed by Lisa Nakamura in Digitizing Race:

“While earlier art criticism viewed art objects as ‘particular things made for particular historical uses,’ [Armstrong] views new media-influenced forms of criticism ... as oriented around ‘exchanges circulating in some great, boundless, and often curiously ahistorical economy of images, subjects, and other representations.”

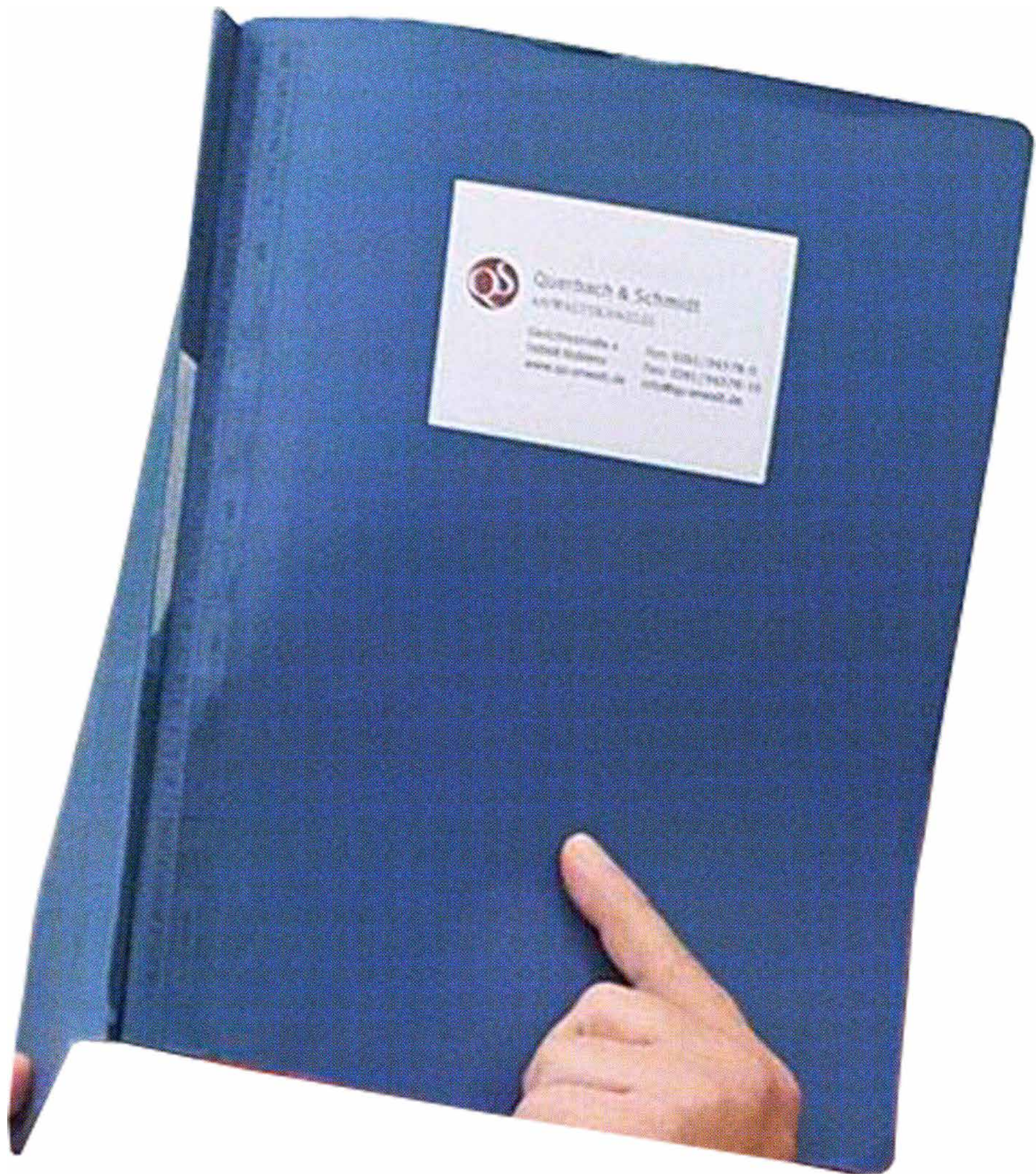
Although GentleWhispering's video activates an embodied response, she describes it as a role-play, but does not acknowledge that role-playing also has consequences, or that materialism goes further than the body.

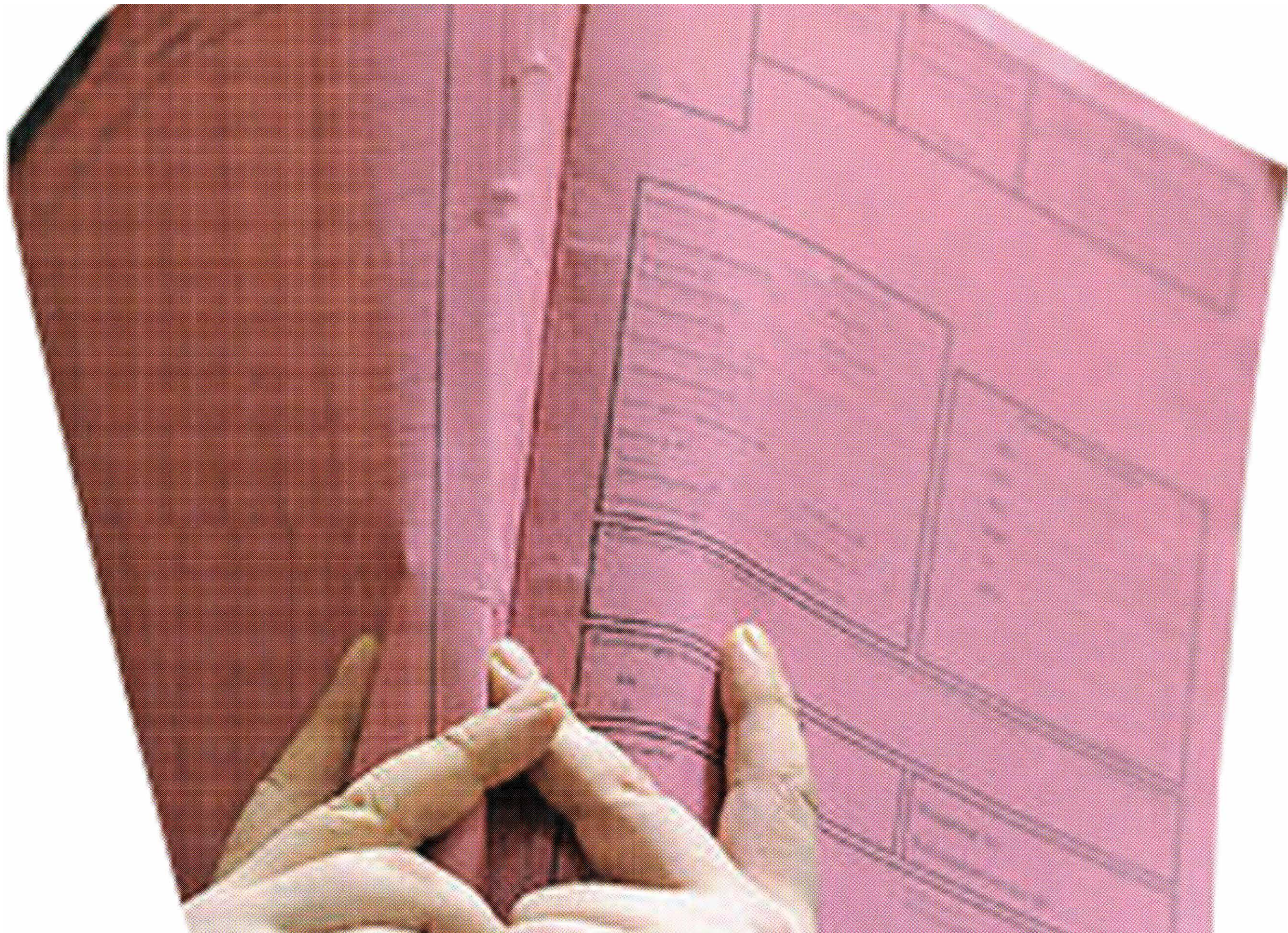
Kondo's advice, in contrast, could be understood as a way of avoiding the pitfalls of the cyberspace model. As users, we should learn to touch our digital materials, to activate our embodied knowledge of our digital archives, to feel our way across their material, historical threads, and perhaps to let go of what we cannot keep. And this is hands-on work, even if the surface we touch is only liquid crystals under glass or the plastic of a keyboard.

With thanks to Eva Diaz, Kaela Noel, Dillon Pettito, Sylvia Gutierrez, and Tatiana Turin.

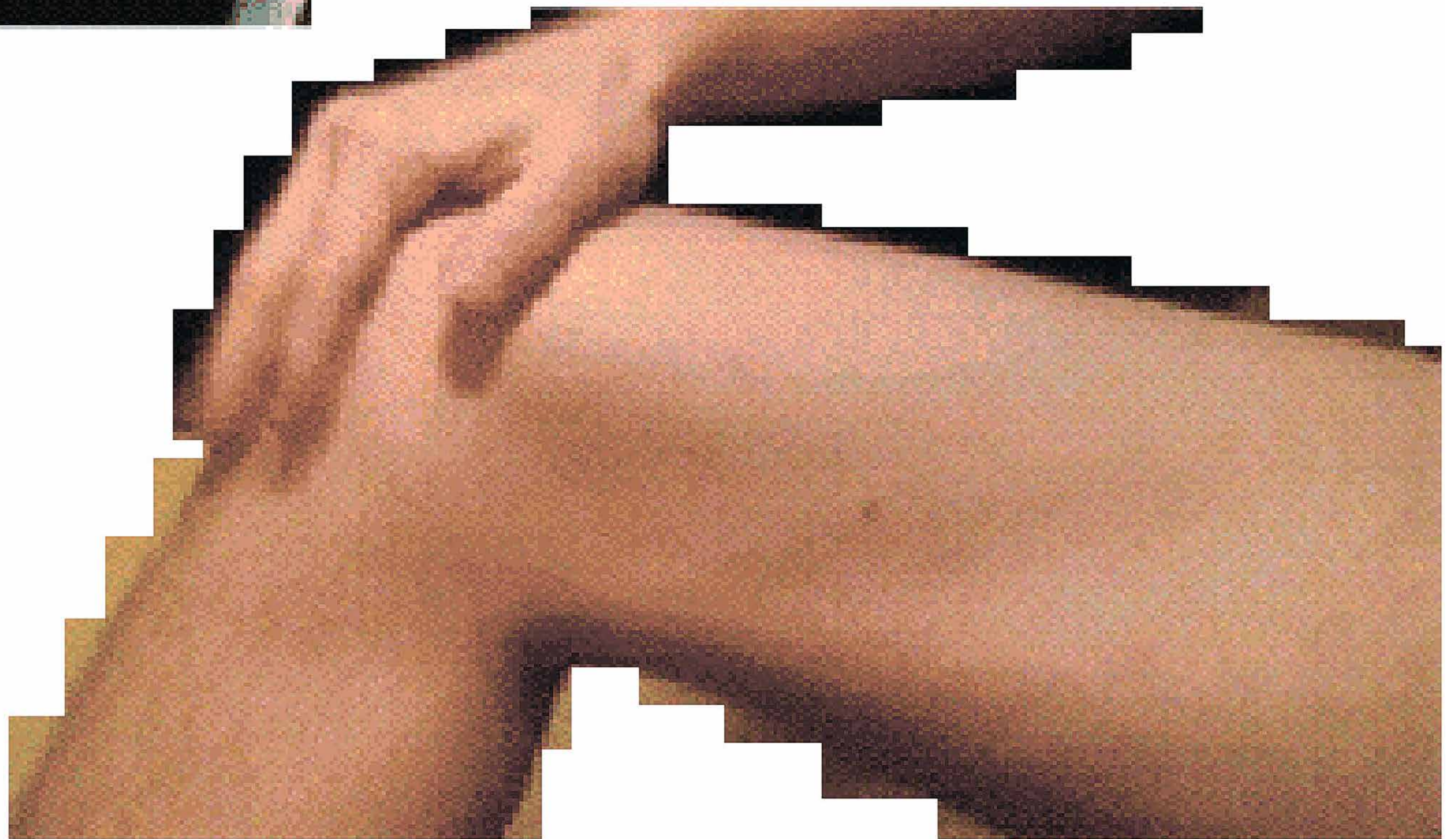


Folding the Web



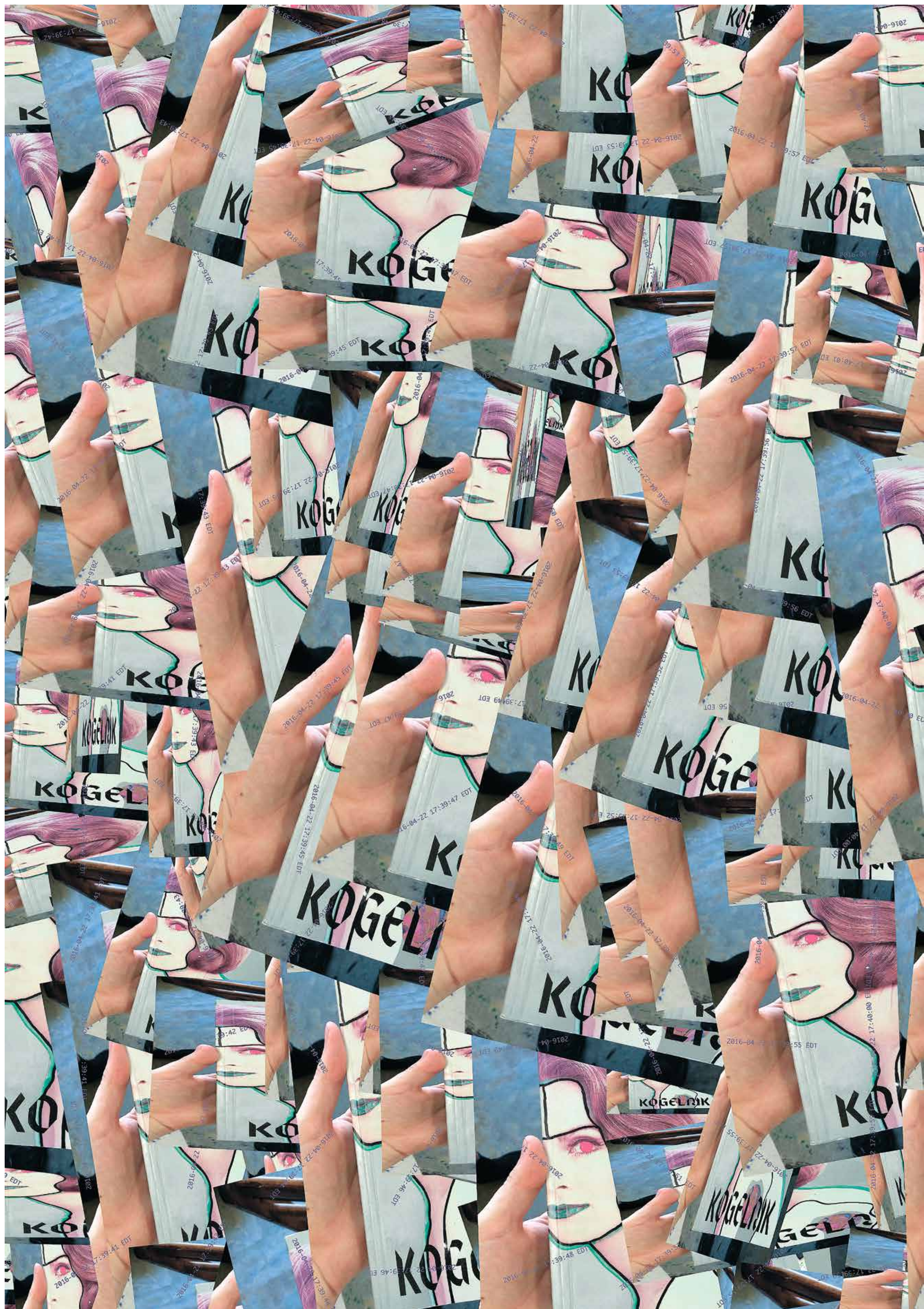


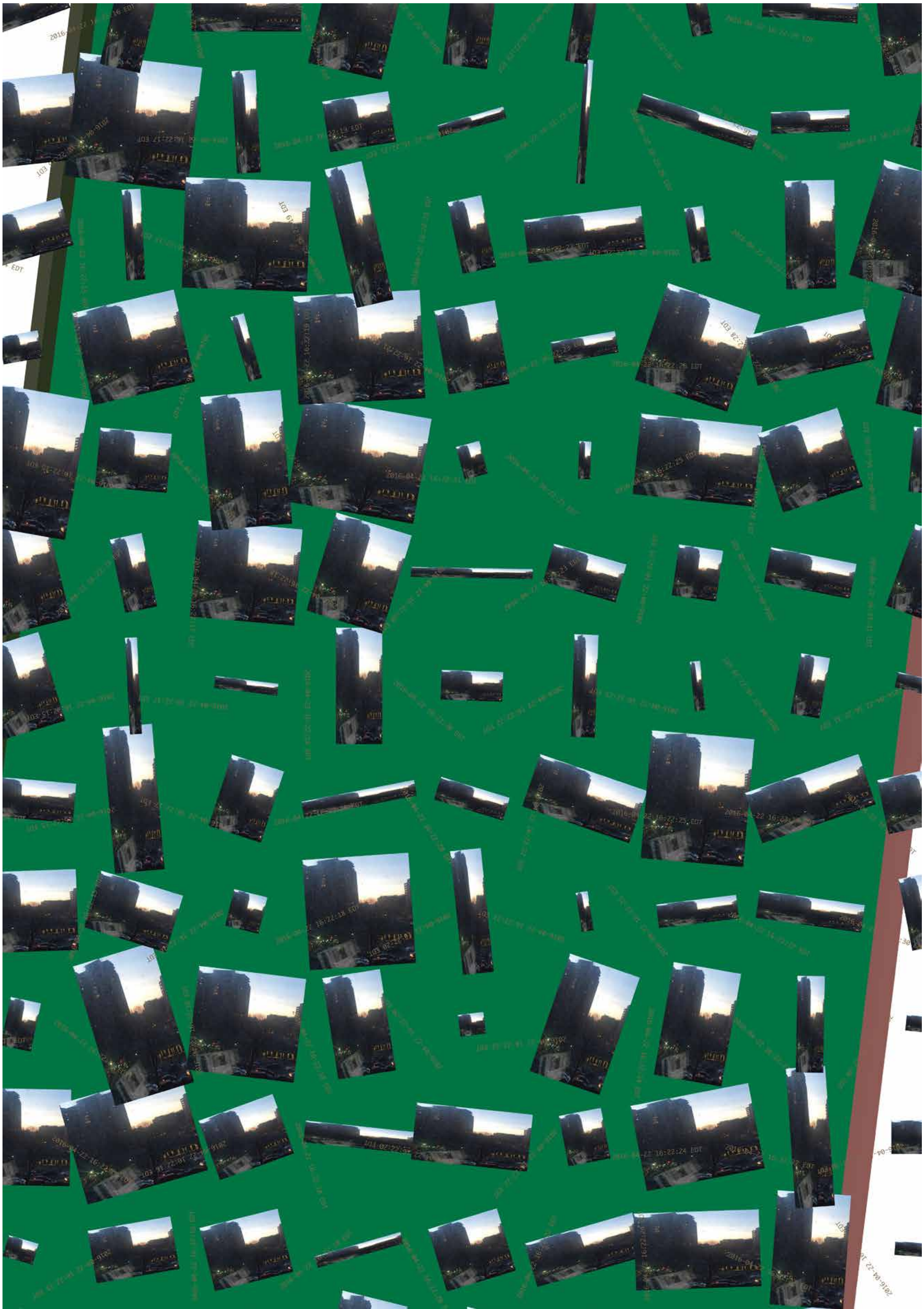
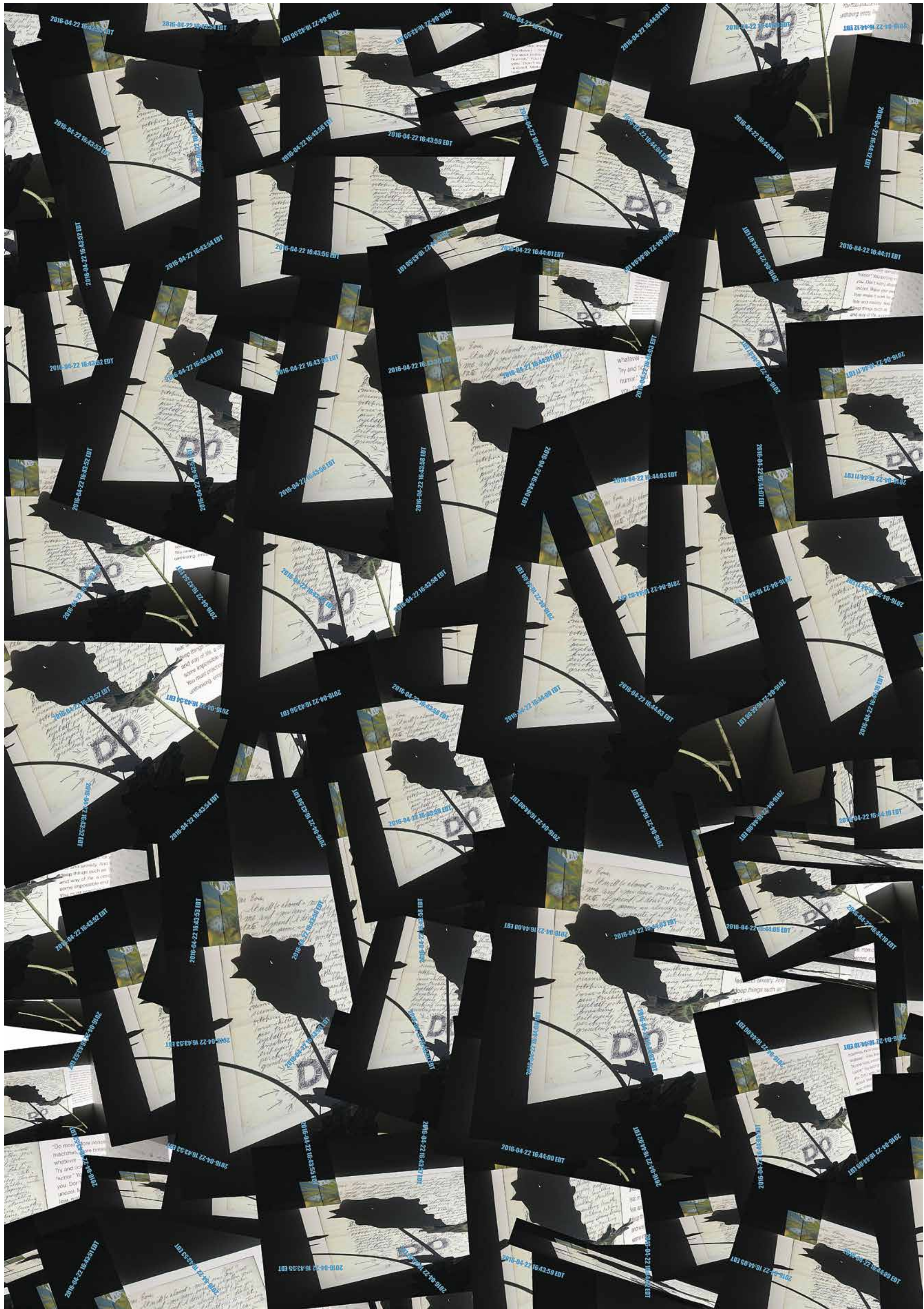










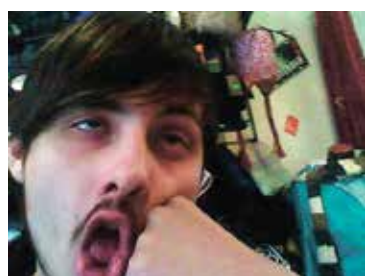
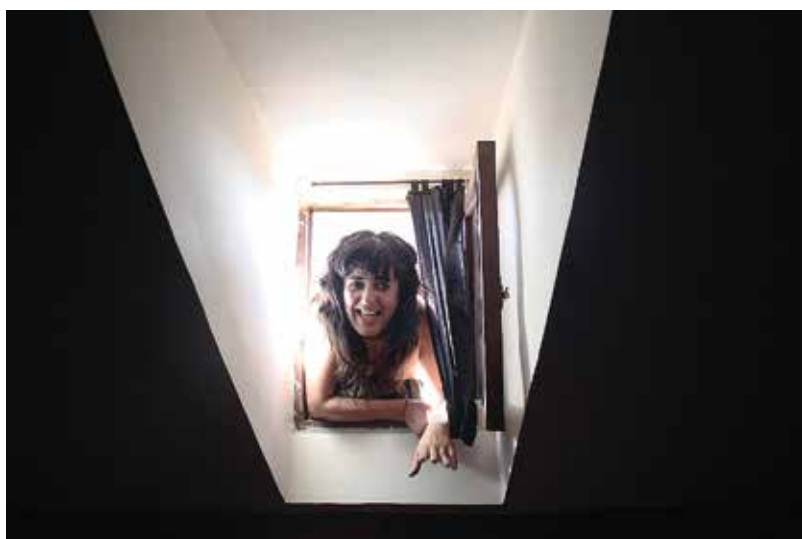




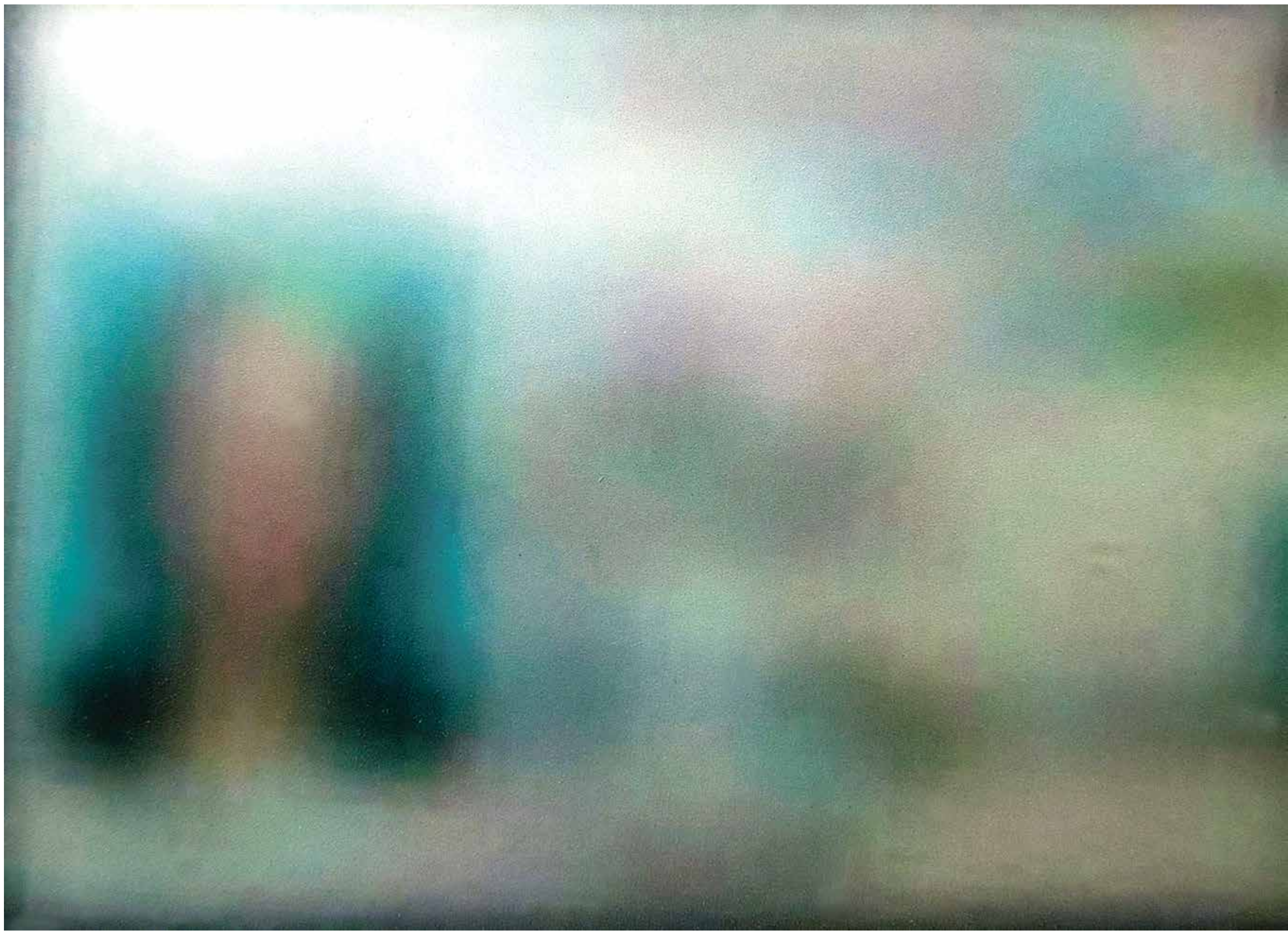
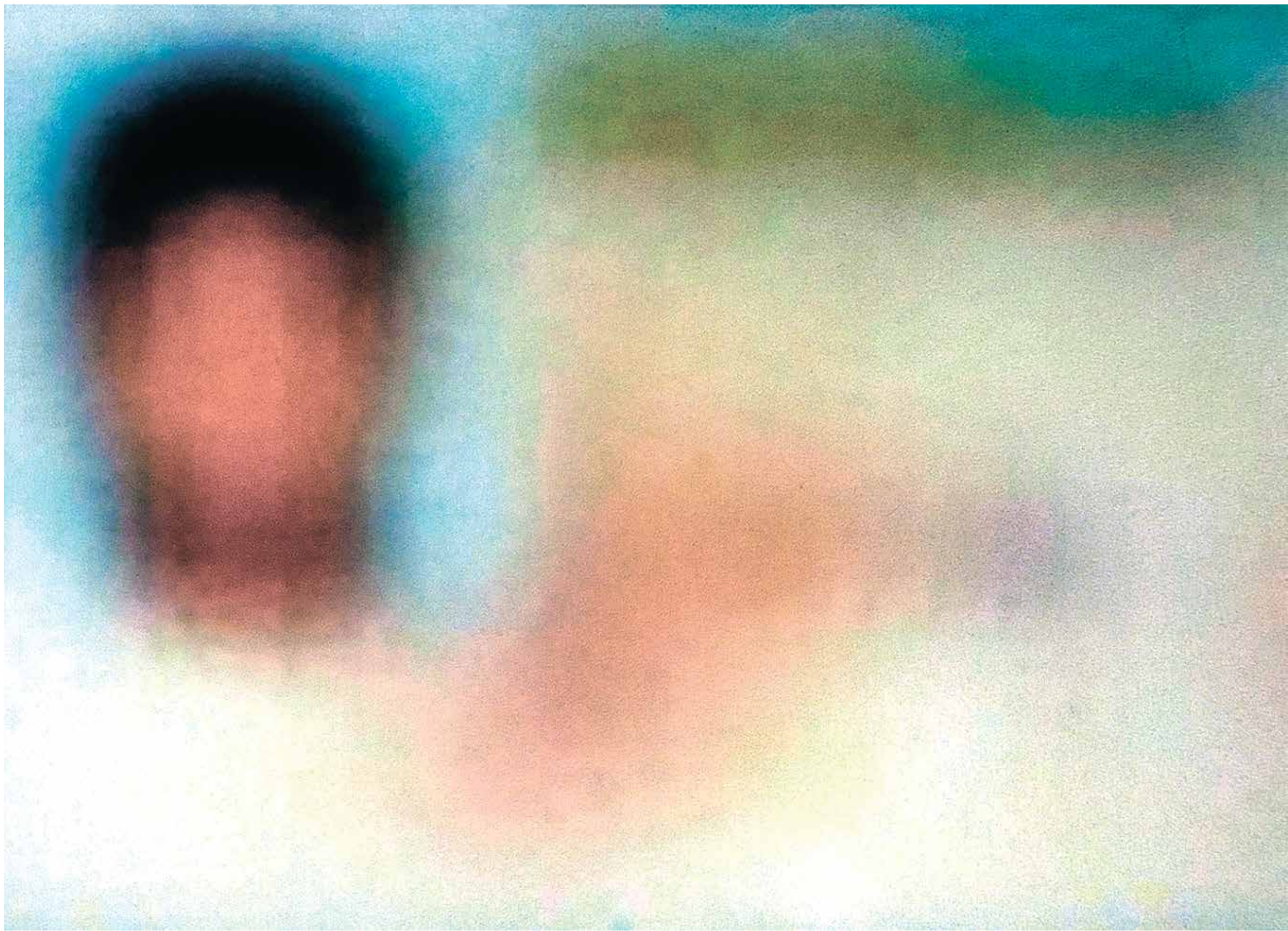


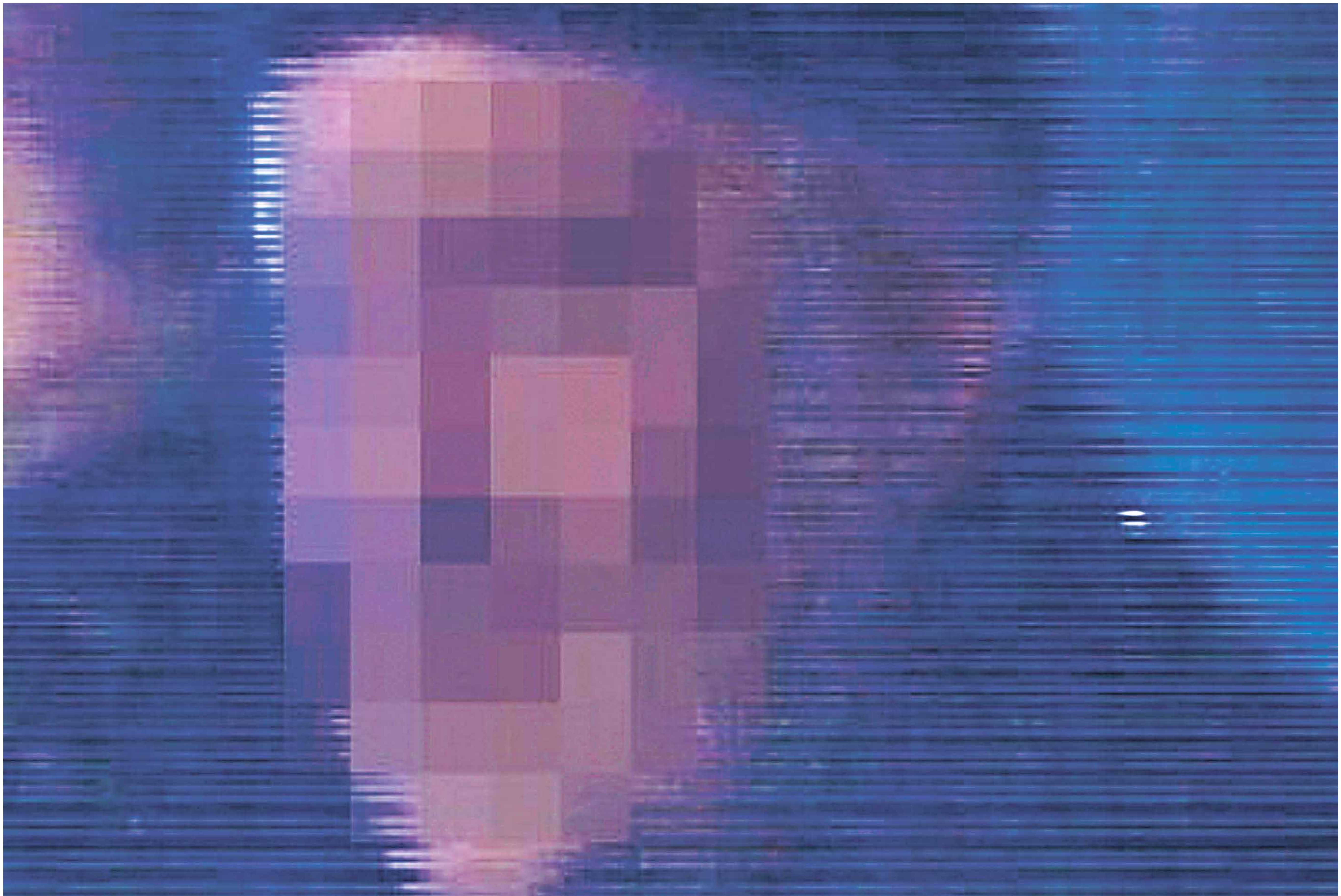


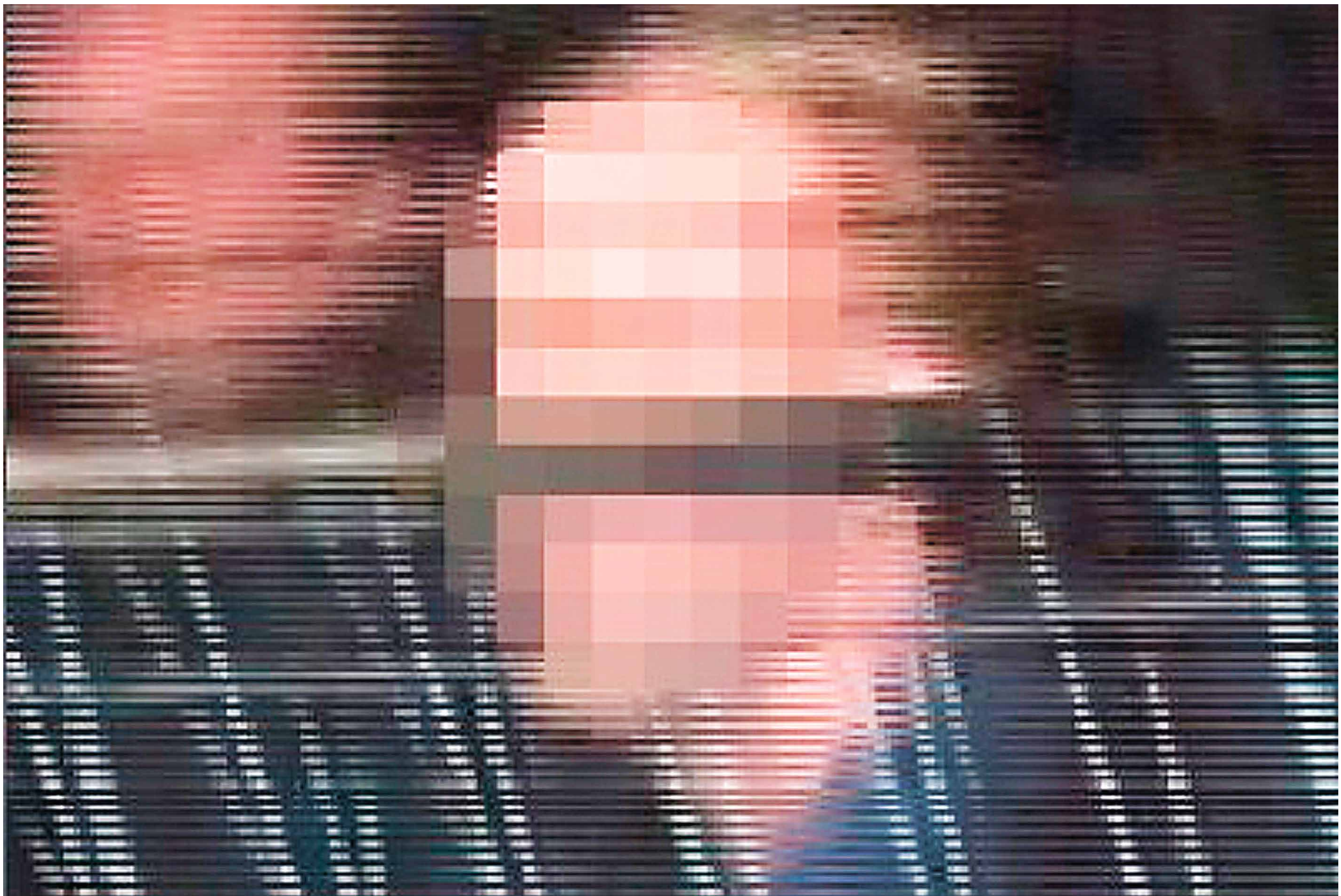
Eva and Franco Mattes

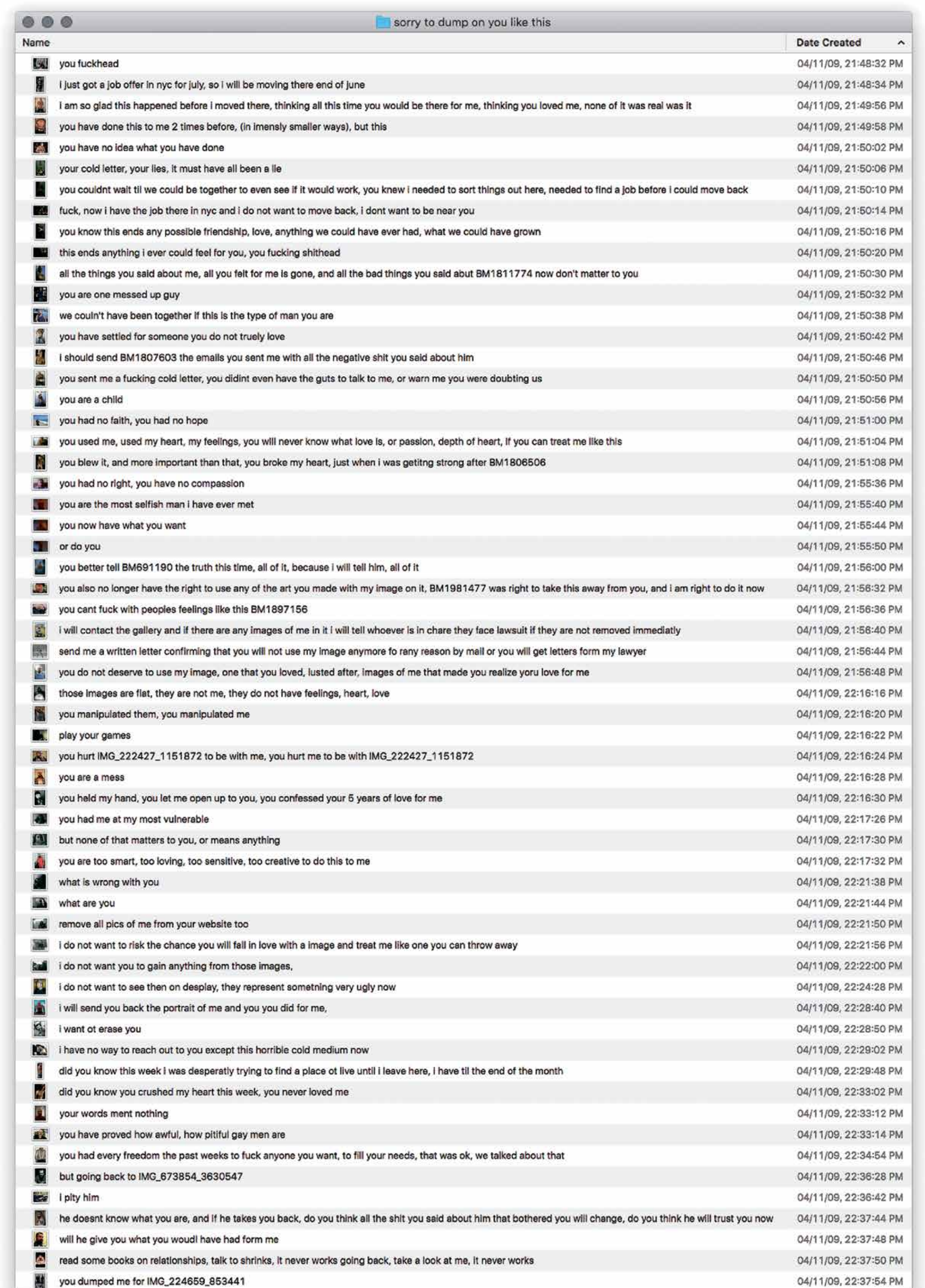


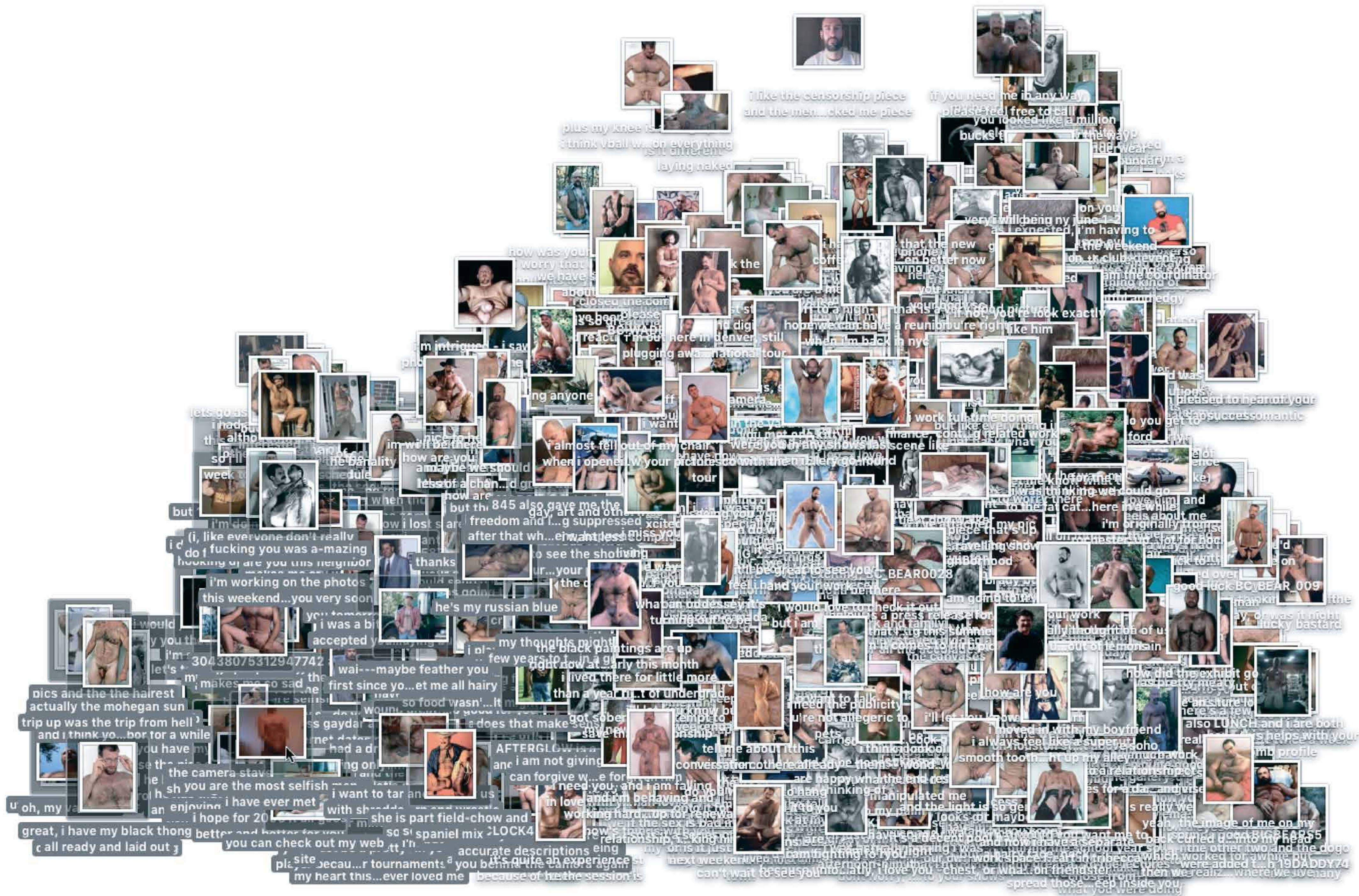














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- 1 Wolfgang Plöger
Accused

Born 1971 in Muenster, Germany. Lives in Berlin. Plöger has participated in numerous exhibitions at international art institutions and galleries such as the Art Institute of Chicago, Kunstwerke Berlin, MuMoK Vienna, MoMA PSI New York, MMK Frankfurt, Konrad Fischer Galerie Berlin / Düsseldorf and Georg Kargl Fine Arts Vienna.
wolfgang-ploeger.com
- 2 Lorna Mills
Knee Slapper

Lorna Mills is a Canadian Net.art and new media artist who is known for her digital animations, videos, and GIFs. She currently lives and works in Toronto, Canada.
- 3 Molly Soda

Molly Soda is an American artist and internet personality. She works across a variety of digital platforms, producing videos, GIFs, zines, and web-based performance art. Her work explores the technological mediation of self-identity, contemporary feminism, culture, and perversion.
mollysoda.biz
- 4 Travess Smalley
2016-04-22_16-21-54
2016-04-22_16-44-17
2016-04-22_16-22-37
2016-04-22_17-40-06

Travess Smalley makes digital paintings, photographs, prints, books, drawings, videos, short stories, websites, and scripts that explore image creation processes and the dialogue between artist and computer. This series of images was created using the AppleScript scripting language and Adobe Illustrator to pull photographs from the artist's phone and compose them.
travesssmalley.com
- 5 Angela Genusa
Throne

This archive of images of U.S. soldiers posing on the Al Faw throne was found in 2014, scattered across the web, by using Google's Image and "Related Images" search functions.

Angela Genusa is a U.S.-based writer and artist. She is the author of No Expert (forthcoming), Simone's Embassy (Eclipse Editions, 2015) Twentysix Gasoline Station Prices (Gauss PDF, 2015), Composition (Gauss PDF, 2014), Twenty-six Wikipedia Articles and Musée du Service des Objets Trouvés (PediaPress, 2013), Spam Bibliography (Troll Thread, 2013); Tender Buttons and Jane Doe (Gauss PDF, 2013); Highlights for Ren (Lulu, 2013), and online dating teenadultdating/Adult-Dating (Lulu, 2012). She is a member of Collective Task, an international group of artists and writers with over 25 participants.
cargocollective.com/angelagenusa
- 6 Eva and Franco Mattes
The Others

A selection from a collection of 10,000 photos appropriated from random people's personal computers without their knowledge. Technically, the act of obtaining the images did not involve any hacking but took advantage of a software glitch.

Eva and Franco Mattes (1976) are an artist duo originally from Italy, working in New York. They are faculty members of the School of Visual Arts, New York.
010010110101101.org

- 7 Anouk Kruithof
Carry On ...
Carry On ... takes on a re-photographed analogue screenshot-montage showing 2,212 firearms, which were confiscated in 2014 at airport security checkpoints all over America. A collage of all these weapons was made by an employee of the TSA and posted on Instagram as an impressive violent but also creative warning against such behavior. For documentation, the identity cards of the contraband owners were part of the display, but for privacy reasons they were always blurred up to a point where even the gender or race of the person were no longer discernible.
Anouk Kruithof (1981) is a Dutch artist based in New York.
anoukkruithof.nl
- 8 Elisabeth Tonnard
Geldermalsen Riots
On December 16, 2015 there were riots in Geldermalsen, a village in The Netherlands close to where I live. The rioters wanted to disturb a local council meeting where plans for a big center for refugees were discussed. After the riots the police asked people to send in any pictures they might have of this evening. A series of these was placed on the police website. Faces in the pictures were made partly unrecognizable and an unusual strategy was announced: anyone who recognized themselves could come forward now, or else their pictures would be shown unblurred on tv later. The strategy worked, 9 out of 10 came forward. The pictures are now gone from the website.
Elisabeth Tonnard has published close to forty books in which existing texts and images are processed and laid out to exhibit their latent messages. The works range in scale and method from a book that is completely invisible to a book that is a swimming pool.
elisabethtonnard.com
- 9 Christopher Clary
Sorry to dump on you like this.zip
It's tempting to call Sorry to dump on you like this.zip a pornographic work, since an actual porn collection is embedded within it — the artist's own archive of men accumulated in fifteen years of web browsing. But these JPGs serve only as a substrate: thin scaffolding for an epic textual work that hangs loosely from the files. The numerous written narratives describe intimate exchanges between boyfriends and lovers, alternating between dramatic betrayals, breakups, and banalities. Laced through the work are heart-breaking utterances, illustrated by found images of men that have already been downloaded, stored, and used. In making them available for us to "re-use," Clary discards them — the title of the work an apology, even, for offloading his memory onto ours.
Christopher Clary is an artist obsessed with pornography. He was trained as a painter. Later took up photography. And now performs and creates across mediums that is less new media and more post-internet. Basically he chases dick wherever it takes him.
christopherclary.com
- 10 Michael Connor
Folding the Web
Michael Connor is Artistic Director of Rhizome at the New Museum in New York, and Visiting Professor in the Photo & Imaging Department at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. He has curated major exhibitions and projects for Cornerhouse, Manchester; the Museum of Moving Image, New York; ACMI, Melbourne; Bell Lightbox, Toronto; FACT, Liverpool; MocaTV and BFI, London. His writing has appeared in 'You Are Here: Art After the Internet' (ed. Omar Khalif, Cornerhouse Books), 'Digital Video Abstraction' (ed. Gabrielle Jennings, UCPress, forthcoming), ArtAsiaPacific, and Artforum.com. Connor has lectured widely on topics relating to art and technology.

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